

## Forest Service, USDA

## §219.3

(5) Planning acknowledges the limits and variability of likely budgets.

(d) Planning meaningfully engages the American people in the stewardship of their national forests and grasslands. Just as the Forest Service can help the American people learn about the limits and capabilities of the national forests and grasslands, managers also should be guided by the knowledge and values of the American people.

(1) Planning encourages extensive collaborative citizen participation and builds upon the human resources in local communities and throughout the nation.

(2) Planning actively seeks and addresses key issues and promotes a shared vision of desired conditions.

(3) Planning and plans are understandable.

(4) Planning restores and maintains the trust of the American people in the management of the national forests and grasslands.

(e) Planning is an ongoing process, where decisions are adapted, as necessary, to address new issues, new information, and unforeseen events.

(1) Planning is innovative and practical.

(2) Planning is expeditious and efficient in achieving goals.

(f) Planning seeks to manage National Forest System resources in a combination that best serves the public interest without impairment of the productivity of the land consistent with the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960.

### THE FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING

#### §219.3 Overview.

(a) *The planning framework.* Land and resource management planning is a flexible process for fitting solutions to the scope and scale of needed action. Planning, conducted according to the planning framework outlined in §§219.3 through 219.11, involves engaging the public (§§219.12 through 219.18) and applying the best available science (§§219.22 through 219.25) to contribute to sustainability (§§219.19 through 219.21) in the use and enjoyment of National Forest System lands.

(b) *Levels of planning.* Planning may be undertaken at the national, re-

gional, national forest or grassland, and/or ranger district administrative levels depending on the scope and scale of issues.

(1) The Chief of the Forest Service is responsible for national planning. National planning includes the Forest Service national strategic plan required under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (5 U.S.C. 306, 31 U.S.C. 1115-1119 and 9703-9704) that establishes national long-term goals, outcome measures, and strategies to be considered in managing the National Forest System and the Resources Planning Act Program (16 U.S.C. 1600).

(2) The Forest or Grassland Supervisor is the responsible official for a plan amendment or revision, except to the extent the Regional Forester or Chief decides to act as the responsible official.

(3) When appropriate, two or more Forest or Grassland Supervisors, one or more Regional Foresters, or the Chief of the Forest Service may undertake planning which may amend or revise one or more plans.

(4) The Chief of the Forest Service, Regional Foresters, National Forest and Grassland Supervisors, or District Rangers may authorize and implement site-specific actions.

(c) *An interdisciplinary, collaborative approach to planning.* An interdisciplinary, collaborative approach to planning may be achieved by engaging the skills and interests of appropriate combinations of Forest Service staff, consultants, contractors, other federal agencies, states, American Indian tribes, Alaska Natives, or local government personnel, or other interested or affected people consistent with applicable laws.

(d) *Key elements.* The planning cycle begins with the identification and consideration of issues and concludes with the monitoring and evaluation of results. Based upon the scope and scale of issues, planning includes one or more of the following key elements:

(1) Identification and consideration of issues (§219.4);

(2) Information development and interpretation (§219.5);

(3) Proposed actions (§219.6);

(4) Plan decisions (§219.7);

## §219.4

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- (5) Amendment (§219.8);
- (6) Revision (§219.9);
- (7) Site-specific decisions (§219.10); and
- (8) Monitoring and evaluation for adaptive management (§219.11).

### §219.4 Identification and consideration of issues.

(a) *Origination of issues.* Issues may originate from a variety of sources including, but are not limited to: Inventories, assessments, analyses, monitoring and evaluation of projects; discussions among people and proposals by organizations or governments interested in or affected by National Forest System management; Presidential, Departmental, and Forest Service conservation leadership initiatives; cooperatively developed landscape goals (§219.12(b)); evaluation of sustainability (§219.9(b)(4)); enactment of new laws; policies such as the Forest Service national strategic plan; and applications for authorization for occupancy and use of National Forest System lands.

(b) *Consideration of issues.* The responsible official has the discretion to determine, at any time, whether and to what extent an issue is appropriate for consideration.

(1) In making this determination, the responsible official should consider:

- (i) The scope, complexity, and geographic scale of potential actions that may address an issue;
- (ii) Statutory requirements;
- (iii) Organizational and community capabilities and available resources, including current and likely Forest Service budgets;
- (iv) The scientific basis and merit of available data and analyses;
- (v) The relationship of possible actions to the Forest Service national strategic plan, other existing plans, adopted conservation strategies, biological opinions, or other strategies applicable within all or a portion of the plan area; and
- (vi) The opinions of interested or affected individuals, organizations, or other entities and the social and cultural values related to an issue.

(2) The responsible official should consider the extent to which addressing the issue relates to or provides:

(i) Opportunities to contribute to the achievement of cooperatively developed landscape goals;

(ii) Opportunities for the national forests and grasslands to contribute to the restoration or maintenance of ecological sustainability, including maintenance or restoration of watershed function, such as water flow regimes to benefit aquatic resources, groundwater recharge, municipal water supply, or other uses, and maintaining or restoring ecological conditions needed for ecosystem and species diversity;

(iii) Opportunities for the national forests or grasslands to contribute to social and economic sustainability;

(iv) Opportunities to recover threatened or endangered species and maintain or restore their habitat;

(v) The potential for negative environmental effects, including human health, economic and social effects, upon minority and low income communities;

(vi) Opportunities to maintain or restore ecological conditions that are similar to the biological and physical range of expected variability (§219.20(b)(1)); and

(vii) Opportunities to contribute to knowledge about and preservation of historic and cultural resources.

### §219.5 Information development and interpretation.

If the responsible official determines an issue should receive consideration, the responsible official should review relevant information such as inventories, broad-scale assessments, local analyses, or monitoring results to determine if additional information is desirable and if it can be obtained at a reasonable cost and in a timely manner. The responsible official, at his or her discretion, may choose the methods and determine the scope of information development and interpretation for an issue under consideration. A broad-scale assessment or a local analysis may be developed or supplemented if appropriate to the scope and scale of an issue. Broad-scale assessments, local analyses, monitoring results, and other studies are not site-specific or plan decisions or proposals for agency action (§219.6(a)) subject to Forest Service NEPA procedures.